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Farm Broadcasters Letter



Letter No. 2308

CURRENT SET RECORDS

April 16, 1987

USSR GRAIN IMPORTS

The estimate of USSR grain imports for the 1986/87 marketing year has been increased by 2 million tons to 28 million, still down from the year earlier level of nearly 30 million. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, this level is somewhat surprising given the fact that the Soviets reported a 1986 crop of 210 million tons, 18 million above the 1985 harvest and the fourth highest on record. This estimate of 1986/87 wheat imports continues at 15 million tons, while the estimate of coarse grain imports has been increased 2 million to 12 million. This past month, USSR grain buyers added to earlier purchases of U.S. corn while apparently finalizing details of the early summer wheat and barley export program from Canada.

EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S.

The export estimates of grain for Argentina and South Africa for the current Oct.-Sept. year are reduced from last month due mainly to smaller crop production forecasts, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The projected corn and sorghum exports from China and corn from Canada are also down in light of low world prices, sluggish trade, and little indication of a pick-up in the near future. Supplies of exportable corn in the U.S. are expected to fill most of the void created by the tighter supplies in some exporting countries. The added market opportunity in countries like the USSR, Korea, Egypt and Japan where import demand is expanding is likely to go mostly to the U.S.

OUTLOOK FOR WHEAT SUPPLIES

The 1986/87 export outlook for the major wheat suppliers - the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia and the European Community - is unchanged from last month, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All of the major exporting countries appear to be on track with the previous estimate and, at this point, show little indication of change that would shift world wheat trade on the export side. However, early reports continue to show adjustments to lower world prices.

CITRUS PRODUCTION

The production of citrus is forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 12 million short tons, that's 10 million 900 thousand metric tons, 10 percent higher than last season. Of this total, orange production is estimated at 7 million 310 thousand metric tons. Grapefruit, 2 million 290 thousand tons.

U.S. CORN SALES

On April 13, private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 350,000 metric tons of corn for delivery to unknown destinations during the 1986/87 marketing year, which began Sept. 1.

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WORLD WHEAT PRODUCTION

The world production of wheat for 1986/87 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a record 529 million 200 thousand metric tons, up 800 thousand or less than 1 percent from last month and up 6 percent from the 1985/86 harvest. An important change from a month ago is production in China, now estimated at a record 90 million 300 thousand tons, up 2 percent from last month and up 5 percent from last year.

WORLD COARSE GRAINS

The world production of coarse grain for 1986/87 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 835 million 200 thousand tons, down 3 million 600 thousand or less than 1 percent from last month and down 1 percent from the record 1985/86 harvest. Changes from a month ago include Argentina production estimated at 14 million tons, down 1 million 500 thousand or 9 percent from last month and down 18 percent from last year. Western Europe production is estimated at 12 million 300 thousand tons, up 1 percent from last month but down 6 percent from last year.

WORLD OILSEEDS PRODUCTION

The world oilseeds production for 1986/87 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at a near record 196 million 500 thousand tons, virtually unchanged from last month, but up less than 1 percent from last year. U.S. production is estimated at 61 million 300 thousand tons, unchanged from last month, but down 6 percent from last year. Foreign production is estimated at a record 135 million 200 thousand tons, essentially unchanged from last month, but up 4 percent from last year.

WORLD COTTON PRODUCTION

The world cotton production for 1986/87 is estimated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at 69 million 500 thousand bales, down less than 1 percent from last month and 12 percent from 1985/86. Foreign output is estimated at 59 million 800 thousand bales, down 9 percent from a year ago. U.S. production is estimated at 9 million 700 thousand bales, down 28 percent from last year.

BEEF & PORK TO CARIBBEAN

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the sale of beef and pork to seven Caribbean nations under the 1985 farm bill. The sales were nearly 28 million pounds of beef and just over 11 million pounds of pork to Antigua, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, St. Lucia and St. Vincent. This sale is part of the 200 million pounds of red meat mandated for export by the Food Security Act of 1985 to minimize the adverse effects of the Dairy Termination Program on U.S. livestock producers. These exports are in addition to historical U.S. livestock producers.

DAIRY CATTLE TERMINATION

An estimated 6,900 head of dairy cattle were slaughtered in federally-inspected plants during the week ending March 27 as a result of the Dairy Termination Program, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The total cattle slaughtered under the program from April 1 through March 27 is an estimated 1,046,900 head.

PIZZA CHEESE PROPOSAL WITHDRAWN

The U.S. Department of Agriculture withdrew a 1983 proposal to establish a minimum requirement for the amount of cheese in meat pizzas and to revise labeling for meat and poultry products continuing cheese substitutes. After reviewing 5,543 comments for and against the proposal, the USDA concluded the proposed new requirements are not necessary.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

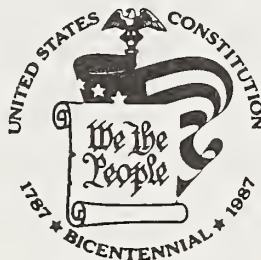
WEATHER AND CROP UPDATE...USDA chief meteorologist Dr. Norton Strommen offers the latest weather and crop update for the U.S., including the impact of recent snowstorms and how farmers are progressing with the planting season. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (171)

WEATHER'S BEHAVIOR PATTERNS...USDA chief meteorologist Dr. Norton Strommen offers some theories as to why weather has taken a turn for the worse in recent years, and whether these extreme shifts in weather's behavior will continue. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (172)

WATER SUPPLY OUTLOOK IN WEST...The water supply outlook for most of the West this summer looks dim. Bill Flecke with USDA's Soil Conservation Service, focuses on factors contributing to this situation. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (173)

CROP PRODUCTION ESTIMATES...A number of factors have changed or strengthened in the past month to boost prospects of increased consumption and higher exports of crops. USDA economist Michael Hanthorn examines the world agricultural supply and demand situation. Vic Powell interviews. (174)

FARMLAND VALUES...Farmland values declined again last year, but at a lower rate than in previous years. USDA economist Bill Heneberry takes a look at the farm real estate situation and outlook. Vic Powell interviews. (175)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1559...(Weekly 13½ min documentary) This time Gary Crawford uncovers the "plane truth" about agriculture as he talks with crop dusting pilots who risk life and limb to help farmers with their work. Gary reports from a USDA airstrip near Washington, D.C., as ag. pilots gather for a "fly-in."

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1548...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; More on commodity certificate redemption extension; Is the family farm really vanishing?; Finding farmers; Better egg hatchability.

CONSUMER TIME #1041...(Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) How to pop pills; Fatal mushroom hunting; Inside Africa; Choosing a pest control operator; Melon meter.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Fri, Apr. 24, Feed outlook, cattle on feed, meat production; Tues, Apr. 28, Crop and weather situation; Thurs, Apr. 30, World tobacco, ag. prices. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

OFF MIKE

Five farm broadcasters will be with Sec'y of Agric Richard Lyng during this 10-day visit in Japan. They are Craighton Knau (KMA, Shenandoah, IA), Harry Martin (Indiana Rural Radio Net, New Palestine, IN), Mark Vail (Kansas Ag Net, Topeka, KS), Lynn Ketelsen (Linder Farm Net, Willmar, MN), and Jack Crowner (Farm Service Net, Louisville, KY). Incidentally, we've talked with Lynne Melillo, press secretary of Sec'y Lyng about farm broadcasters joining the Secretary on overseas trips. She said there's no set policy and that each trip will be considered individually. Hopefully we'll have enough advance notice so we can let you know with enough time to decide and react ... Welcome visitor in the office this week, Orion Samuelson (WGN, Chicago, IL). He was in town for another meeting and some interviews and stopped by to say hi and send a feed back to co-worker Max Armstrong ... Call from Bruce Lease (KWOA, Worthington, MN). He saw our item about the funny winter

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weather and said if anyone wants to winter in southwest Minnesota they are free to do so. He said they had a very mild winter this year. Yeh, but what about next year? ... John Baker (author "Farm Broadcasting: The First 60 Years") dropped us a note in which he (1) chastised us for some poor grammar and (2) reported he had received a note from George Biggar, who was one of the very earliest farm broadcasters, starting at WLS in 1924. George is living in the Fargo Nursing Home, 1831 Broadway, Fargo, ND 58102, in case you'd like to drop him a note ... Just talked with Gary Stewart (Northwest Ag News Net, Seattle, WN). He will be feeding us several reports for our radio newsline from the National Food & Agriculture Exposition in Seattle, which starts April 29. The newsline numbers are listed on the previous page.

James L. Johnson
JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division